## REMARKS

The rejection of Claims 1-7, 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a or e) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over, US 2003/0022575 (Yoneda et al. is respectfully traversed.

Yoneda et al discloses a nonwoven fabric comprising a first layer (side A) made with ultrafine fibers having a fineness of 0.01 to 0.5 dtex, and the opposite side (side B) made with ultrafine fibers having a fineness of not more than 1/2 of the fineness of the ultrafine fibers in side A [0010].

In response to Applicants' arguments that Yoneda et al controls only the finenesses of two kinds of ultrafine fibers, and fails to describe or suggest the combined use of two kinds of ultrafine fibers which are different from each other in average elongation at break and average tenacity, as required by the present claims herein; that Table 2 herein demonstrates that leather-like sheets fail to produce good results simultaneously in feel, wearing comfort and durability under use, if the layer (I) and the layer (II) are composed of the same kind of microfine fibers or fail to satisfy the recited average elongation at break and average tenacity relationships; that Yoneda et al is completely silent about the relationships between the draw ratio and the elongation at break and tenacity of fibers, as shown by the data in the specification herein; and that Yoneda et al does not disclose drawing ratios as low as 2, and the significance of such relatively low drawing ratios, the Examiner finds that the recited properties of the presently-claimed invention "are presumed to be inherent because the fabric [of Yoneda et al] uses similar materials and methods of making to produce the finished composite." The Examiner further finds with regard to the above-discussed argument about draw ratio that the present claims do not recite a specific draw ratio, and therefore, the arguments are not commensurate in scope with the claimed product. The Examiner further

finds that Applicants' arguments that the draw ratio can be controlled to produce the recited properties are not sufficient to show that Yoneda et al would not have these properties.

In reply, the above-amended claims now require that, in effect, the ratio of the average fineness of microfine fiber (B) to that of microfine fiber (A), while still equal to or less than 1, i.e., equal to or less than 100%, be at least 1/1.76, or at least approximately 57%. Thus, on this limitation alone, the present invention is outside the scope of Yoneda et al which, as discussed above, has a corresponding fineness ratio of not greater than 50%.

In addition, Claim 1 now requires recitation of the particular drawing ratio to enable satisfaction of formulae (1) through (8).

Note further that the ultrafine fiber-generating filaments disclosed in Example 1 of Yoneda et al and the microfine fiber-forming fibers of Fiber Production Examples 2-5, i.e., Fiber Nos. 2-5, respectively, described in the specification herein, are produced in substantially the same manner from the same polymers, i.e., 6-nylon and polyethylene. Therefore, it would be reasonably expected that the fibers of Yoneda et al and above-discussed Fiber Nos. 2-5 would have similar properties, i.e., both the ultrafine fiber-generating filaments a' and b' of Yoneda et al fail to meet the presently-recited requirements (1) and (2), and fail to generate the microfine fibers meeting the recited requirements (5) and (6) of Claims 2 and 5.

Note further that the present invention is directed to a **suede-finished** leather-like sheet, while Yoneda et al relates to a **grain-finished** leather-like sheet. It is well-recognized in the artificial leather art that the suede finish and the grain finish require variant and non-analogous considerations because of different characteristics and properties of the suede-finished surface and the grain-finished surface. As described in the specification at [0035], an excessively large difference between the average finenesses of microfine fibers (A) and (B), respectively, may cause nonuniform dyeing of the final suede-finished leather-like sheet.

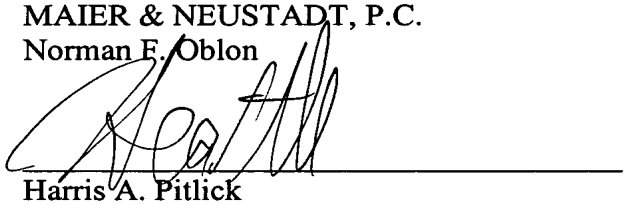
If the surface of the leather-like sheet material of Yoneda et al is raised for the production of a suede-finished leather-like sheet, both surfaces would be covered with a raised nap composed of two kinds of microfine fibers which are extremely different from each other in their finenesses. The fibers having extremely different finenesses are heterogeneously dyed to produce an unfavorable mélange-like appearance. This problem is a characteristic of suede-finished surfaces and is not addressed by Yoneda et al because, as discussed above, Yoneda et al is concerned with a grain-finished leather-like sheet.

For all the above reasons, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

All of the presently-pending claims in this application are believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.
Norman F. Oblon



Harris A. Pitlick
Registration No. 38,779

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 03/06)

NFO:HAP